



# City of Seattle

Mike McGinn, Mayor

## Seattle Office for Civil Rights

Julie Nelson, Director

March 2, 2011

TO: City Councilmembers

FROM: Julie Nelson, Director

SUBJECT: Race and Social Justice Initiative: 2011 overview briefing

Thank you for your support of the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) throughout 2010. Your engagement with departmental mid-year progress reports and application of a racial equity analysis to budget and policy decisions has been critically important. In addition, it has been a pleasure to facilitate workshops in which many of you participated and to work with your Change Team. Your leadership provides an example for others throughout the city.

RSJI Manager Glenn Harris and I are looking forward to providing you an update on Monday, March 7. This memo provides a general overview of our current priorities.

### **Organizational change**

The Initiative has attained critical mass across City government, not just in our theoretical understanding, but also in application of RSJ tools to policy development and implementation. We saw this, for example, in Council's own application of racial equity analysis in consideration of decisions on environmental, land use and criminal justice issues. We also have seen progress across all departments in implementation of racial equity tools.

The 2011 budget was challenging, but we saw departments use the toolkit in Budget Issue Papers to highlight the potential racial equity impact of proposed cuts and propose mitigating strategies. The City's Budget Office used similar criteria to evaluate departments' proposal, resulting in a consideration of racial equity throughout the budget development process.

Over 5000 employees completed the RSJI employee survey at the end of 2010. We are currently analyzing the data and anticipate that it will provide useful feedback for furthering organizational changes. We would welcome the opportunity to provide you a briefing in April on the results.

In 2011 we will continue to promote departments' use of the racial equity toolkit, with an emphasis on Citywide initiatives and use of the toolkit in developing and implementing departmental programs and policies.

### **Race and Social Justice Initiative 2011 work plan**

The RSJI 2011 work plan calls on all departments to implement strategies both within City government and in conjunction with other institutions and organizations to eliminate race-based inequity in the community.

### **Internal efforts within Seattle City government**

SOCR will continue coordination of the Initiative with emphasis on three priorities:

- Contracting equity: Implement Consultant Contract Procedures for Women and Minority Business Inclusion and improve coordination between departmental contract managers and WMBE designees.
- Workforce equity: Develop strategies to improve upward mobility for administrative assistants and laborers, with a focus on institutional support for upward mobility and incorporate RSJ competencies in job descriptions and performance evaluations.
- Inclusive outreach and public engagement: Develop a response to the Statement of Legislative Intent for revised Citywide interpretation / translation policies, and continue coordination and support of departments' implementation of IOPE best practices. Support and promote the use of Planning Outreach Liaisons in large City initiatives (i.e. the "trusted advocates" model used in Neighborhood Planning).

### **Achieve racial equity beyond City government**

The City of Seattle cannot achieve racial equity on its own; it requires a true community-wide effort. To advance those efforts, the City has joined with public and private organizations and institutions as the Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable. Roundtable member organizations have committed to eliminate institutional racism within their own operations; in addition, all are joining together to end structural racism across the community. With its initial focus on educational, the Roundtable is working to eliminate race-based inequities in educational outcomes, including changing policies that lead to disproportionality in discipline. The Roundtable is also working on a statewide legislative agenda on educational equity, and is promoting the use of a "Racial Equity Tool" in local institutions and organizations.

We appreciate City Council support for the Roundtable, both with Councilmember Harrell's participation on the Roundtable, as well as your inclusion of consultant funds to support the Roundtable in 2011. These funds will be used to provide technical assistance and/or training to support Roundtable member use of the racial equity toolkit, provide technical assistance and/or training for Roundtable member organizational change strategies to affect structural racism, and organize a community event or series of community events that would share Roundtable work and provide opportunities for other community members to engage with efforts to eliminate race based inequity in the community, with a focus on education.

### **RSJI: long-range planning in 2011**

2011 marks the last year of the three-year plan that we began to implement in 2009. By the end of the year, we will develop a new three-year work plan for the Initiative, working closely with the Mayor and Council.

I look forward to meeting with you on March 7 to provide more details concerning the Initiative and to answer any questions you may have. If you have comments or questions prior to the briefing, please contact me at 233-7822 or Glenn Harris at 255-7556.